

Meetings Industry PULSE Survey

EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST, AFRICA REGION

New Data

JUNE 2026



Planners regain confidence while cost pressures persist

SHARP REBOUND IN OPTIMISM WITH LONGER PLANNING HORIZONS, BUT ARE SMALLER EVENTS NEW NORMAL?

- **Planner confidence has strengthened significantly** with 43 per cent reporting a more optimistic outlook, up from 27 per cent last year, marking the strongest sentiment seen in 12 months.
- **Event activity remains healthy** with 70 per cent of event planners expecting to produce more meetings than last year, returning to 2024 levels after a softer 2025.
- **Planning timelines are lengthening.** Planners are now sourcing events seven–12 months or more out, reflecting greater strategic planning influenced by ongoing uncertainty.
- **Attendance and exhibitor revenue expectations have weakened** with fewer planners forecasting growth in attendee numbers and only 17 per cent expecting revenues to exceed last year's levels.
- **Cost management remains a priority** as airline pricing, rising service costs, and geopolitical issues remain chief among planners' concerns. Overall, however, concerns are less pressing than a year ago.
- **Flexibility is still central to venue negotiations** with planners seeking attrition protection, variable-rate clauses, and attendance safeguards to manage demand uncertainty and late registrations.
- **AI adoption continues to expand but remains uneven.** Planners are reporting gains in efficiency and content creation, while seeing opportunities in sourcing, negotiations, analytics, and decision support.

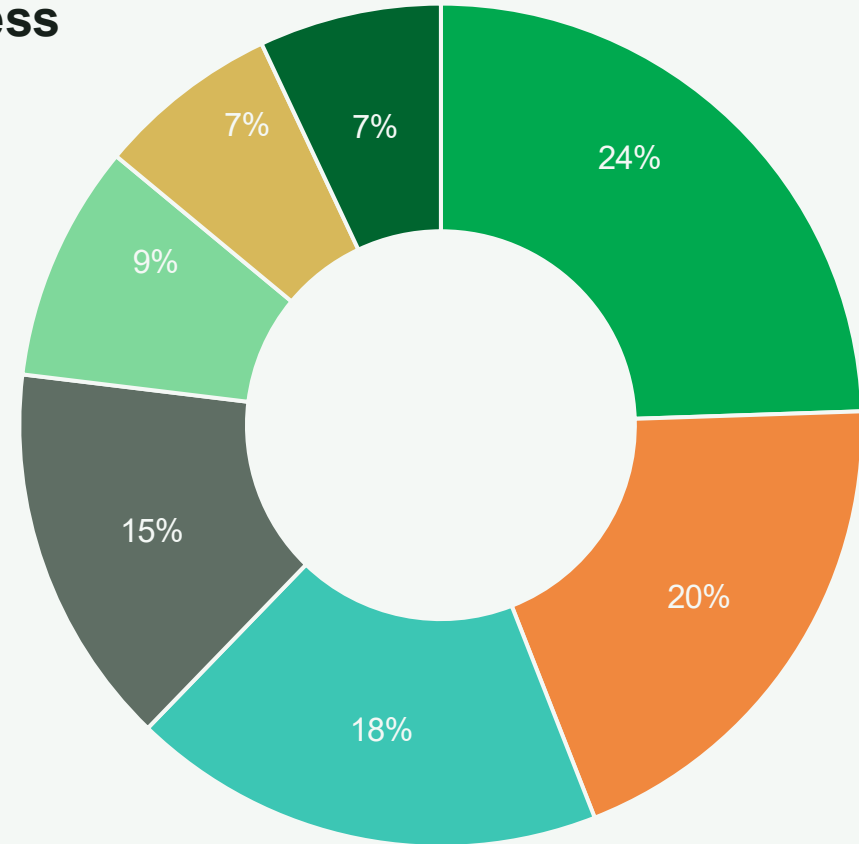
143 planner responses

THERE WAS A GOOD REPRESENTATION FROM ALL THE MAIN PLANNER TYPES

Primary Business

- Corporate
- Professional conference organiser
- Third party/Independent planner/Travel agency/Event agency
- Association/Not-for-Profit/Association management company
- Sports
- Government
- Other

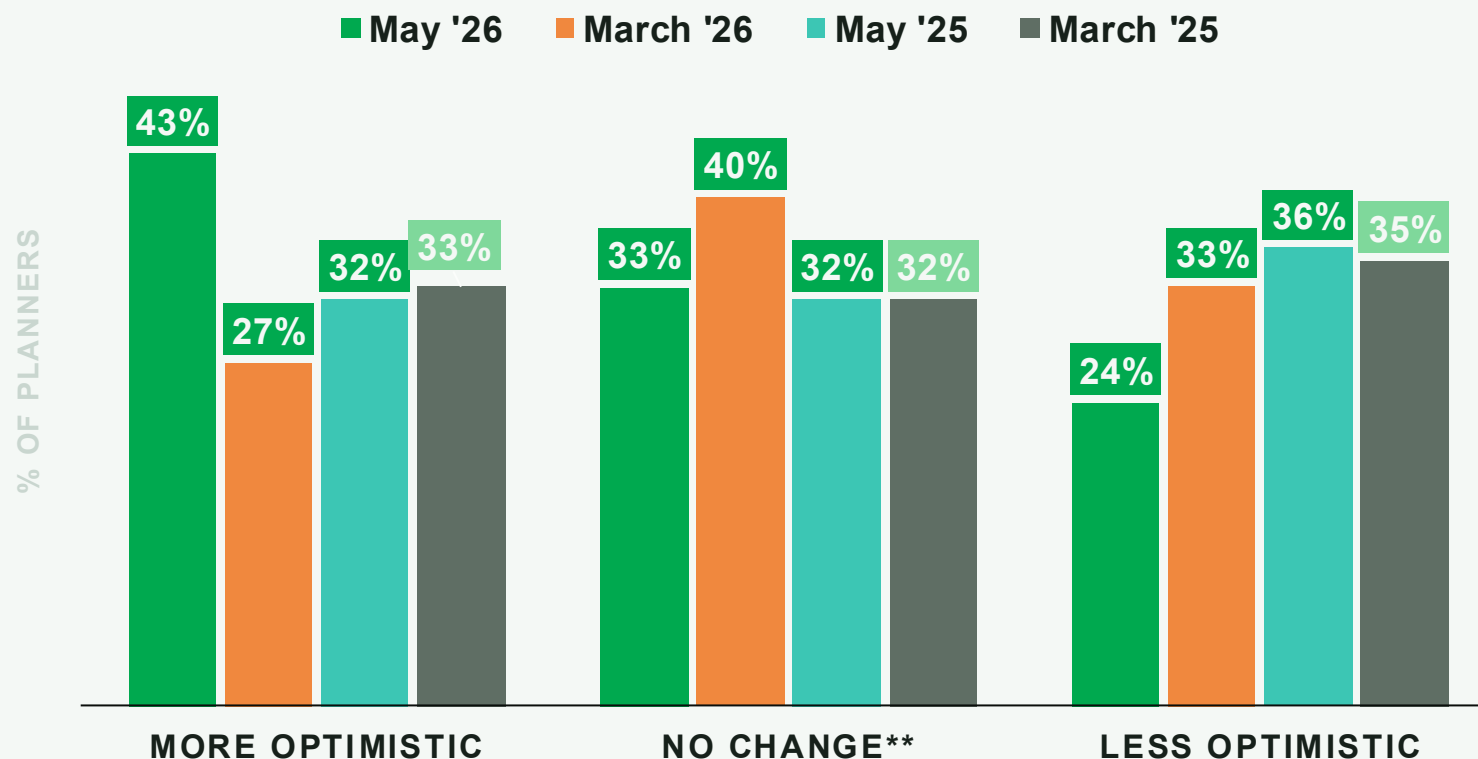
% OF TOTAL RESPONDENTS



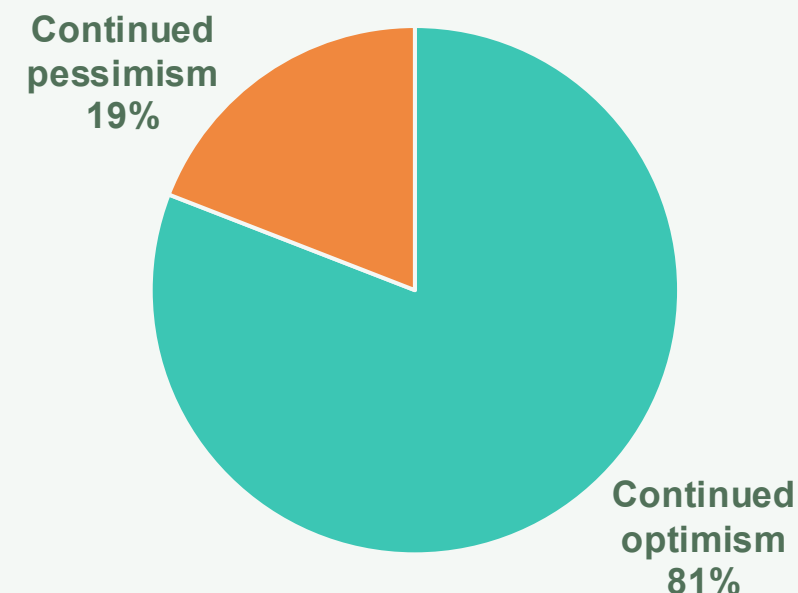
Planners' outlook more positive than it has been

OPTIMISM LEVELS ARE UP SIGNIFICANTLY OVER PREVIOUS QUARTERS

How has your outlook for your meetings and events changed over the past three months?



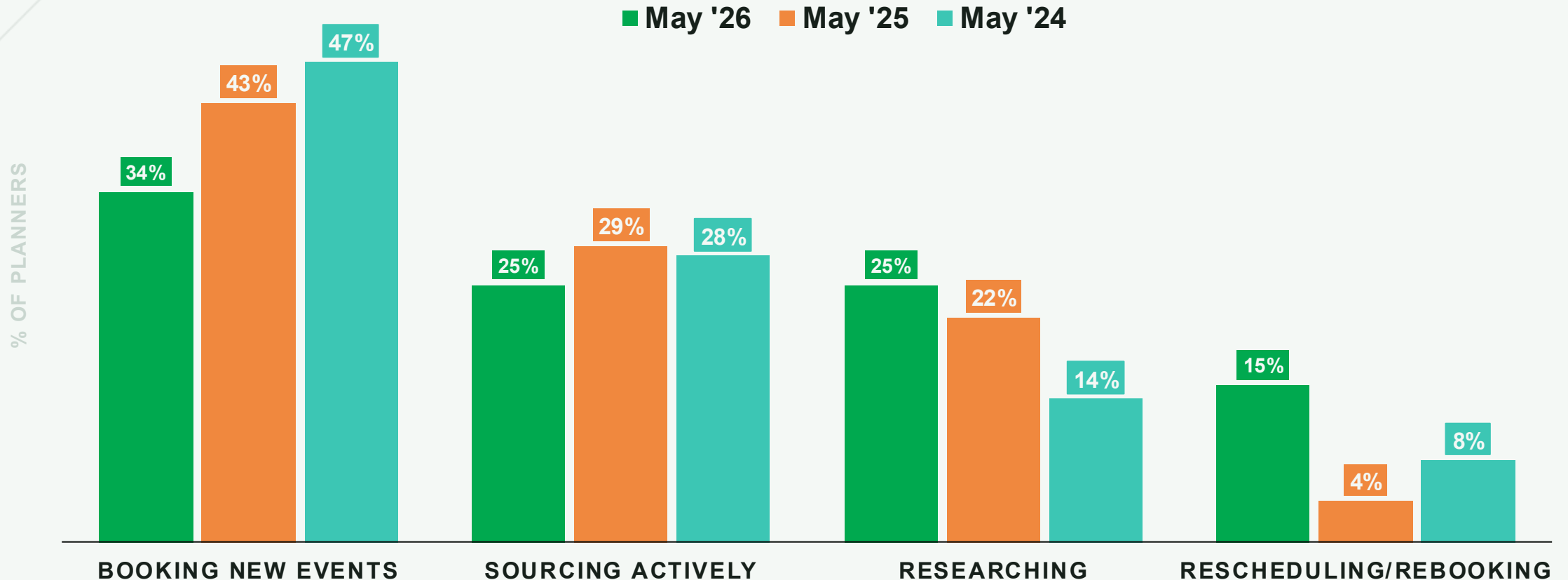
**Has your outlook remained unchanged due to continued optimism or continued pessimism?



New bookings are down, but more planners are researching

NUMBER RESCHEDULING IS SIGNIFICANTLY UP, PERHAPS REFLECTING GLOBAL TENSIONS

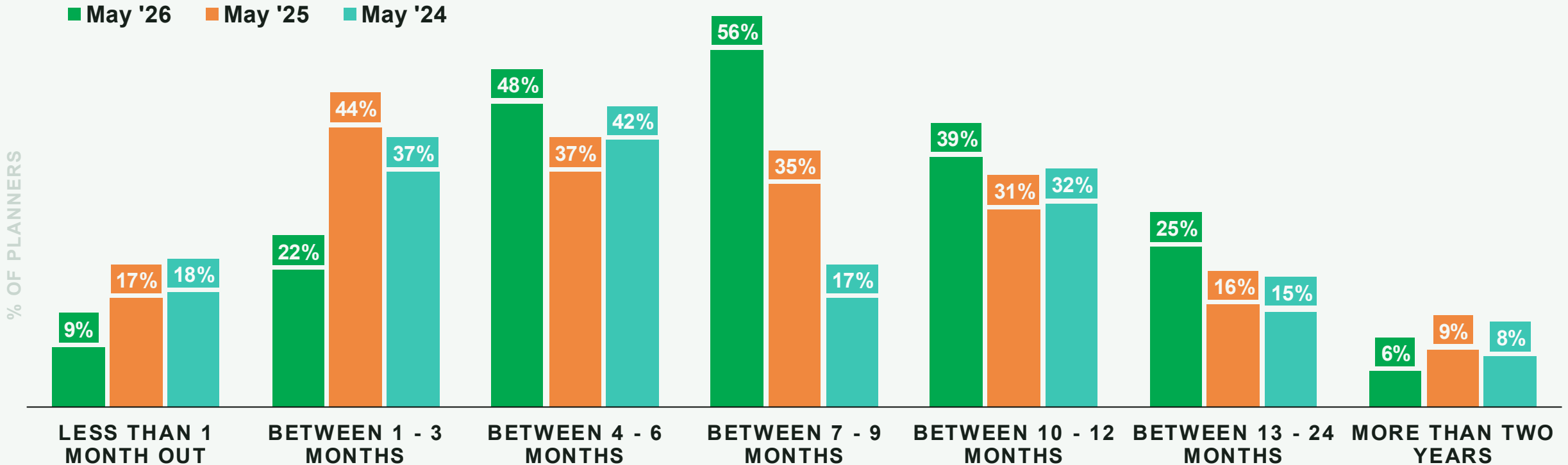
What is your current primary focus as it pertains to your live, in-person events?



There are significant shifts in planning horizons

EMEA PLANNERS ARE SOURCING MUCH FURTHER OUT THAN PREVIOUS YEARS

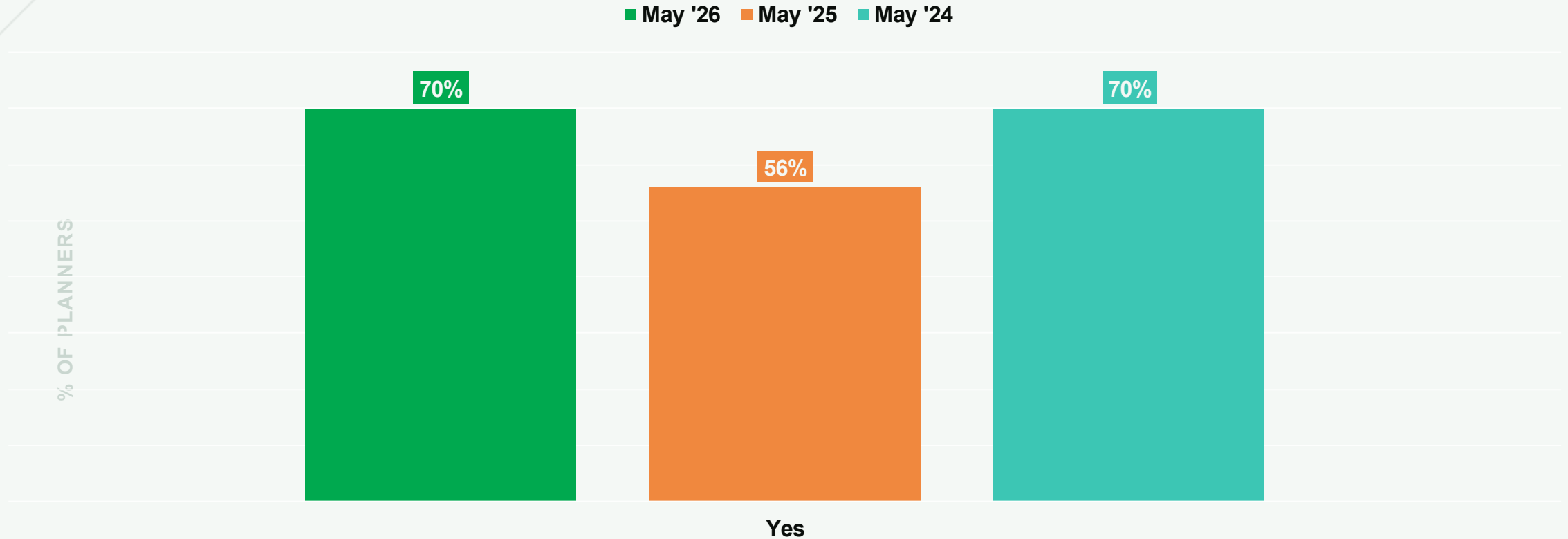
For current events you are now booking or actively sourcing, when is the expected start day (months out)? Select all that apply.



Planners are booking more meetings than last year

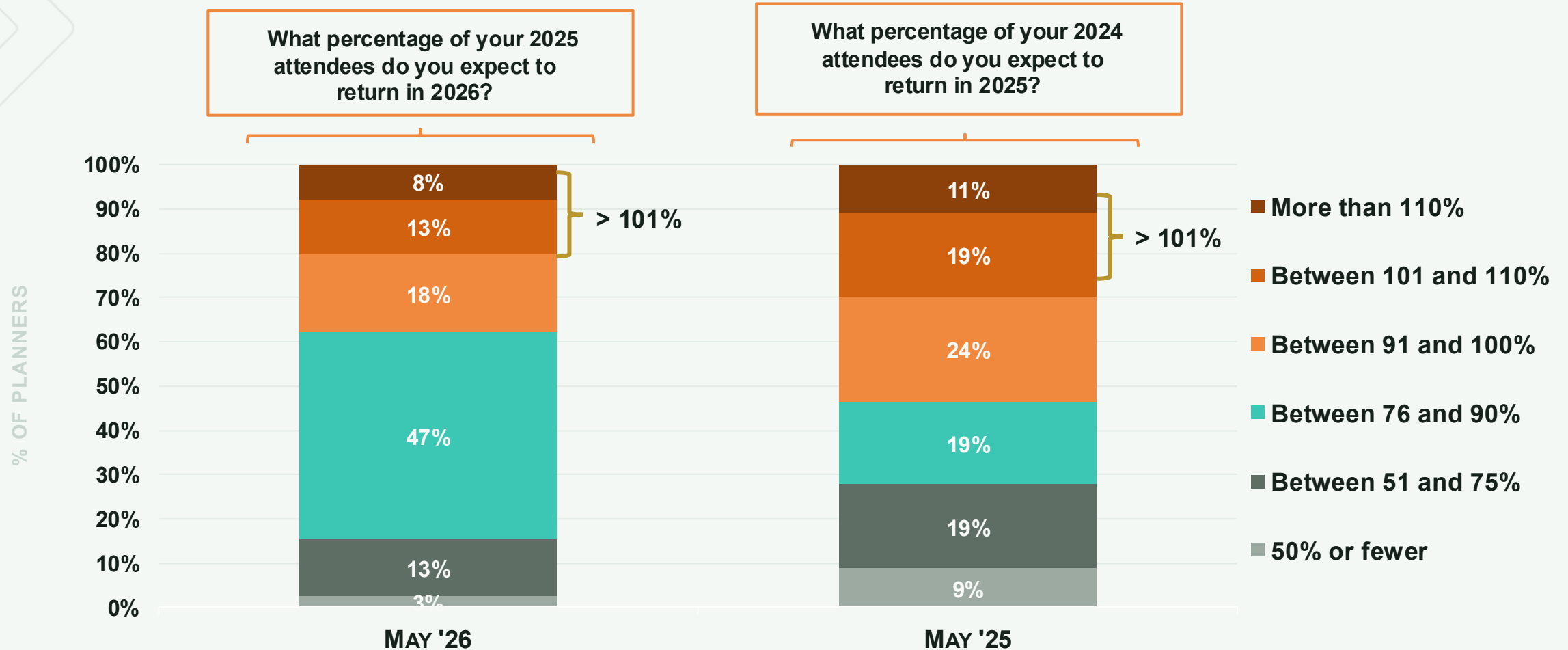
THE PROPORTION OF PLANNERS BOOKING MORE MEETINGS IS BACK TO 2024 LEVELS

Will you or your organisation produce more meetings this year than you did last year?



Planners expect attendance to decline

LAST YEAR, 30% EXPECTED INCREASED ATTENDANCE IN 2024; ONLY 21% ANTICIPATE MORE THIS YEAR.

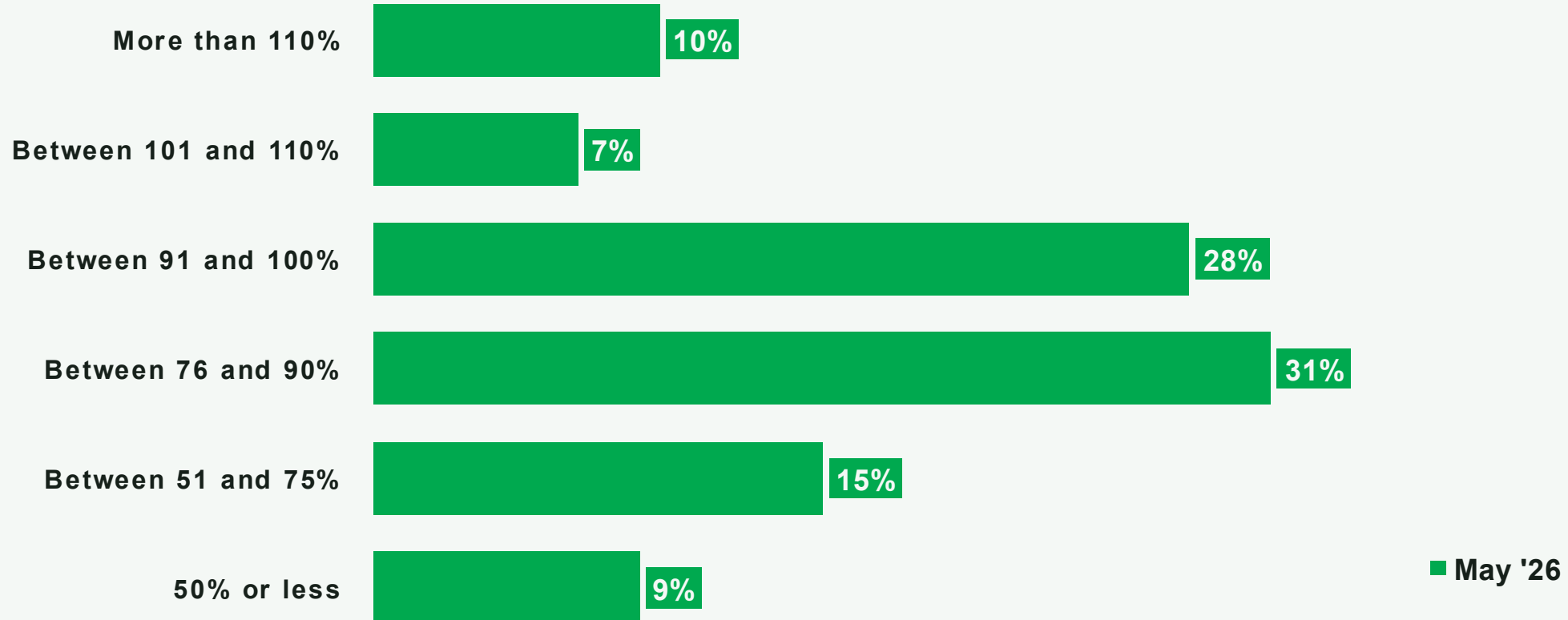


Most planners expect less exhibitor/sponsor revenue

ONLY 17% EXPECT TO EARN MORE REVENUE THAN LAST YEAR, DOWN FROM THE PRIOR YEAR

What percentage of your 2025 exhibitor/sponsor revenue do you expect to raise for your meetings and events this year?

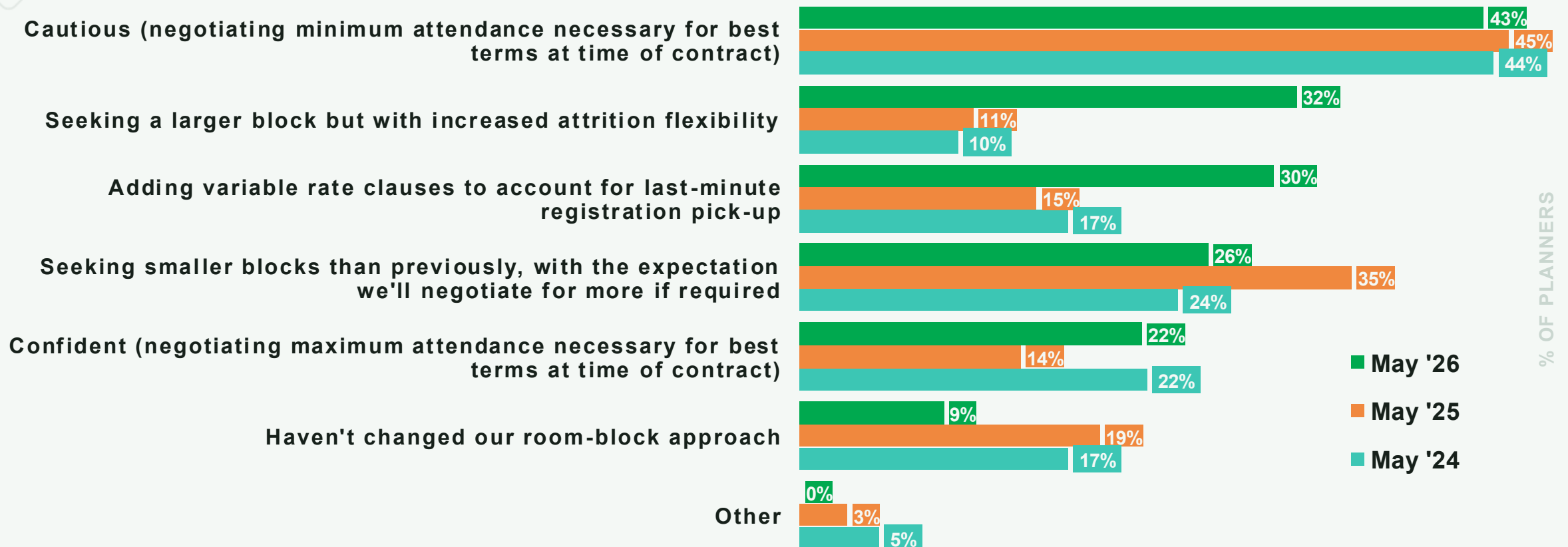
% OF PLANNERS



Flexibility is a key negotiating strategy

PLANNERS ANTICIPATE ATTRITION AND LAST-MINUTE REGISTRATIONS

When dealing with hotels and venues, which of the following matches your negotiating strategy? Please select all that apply.

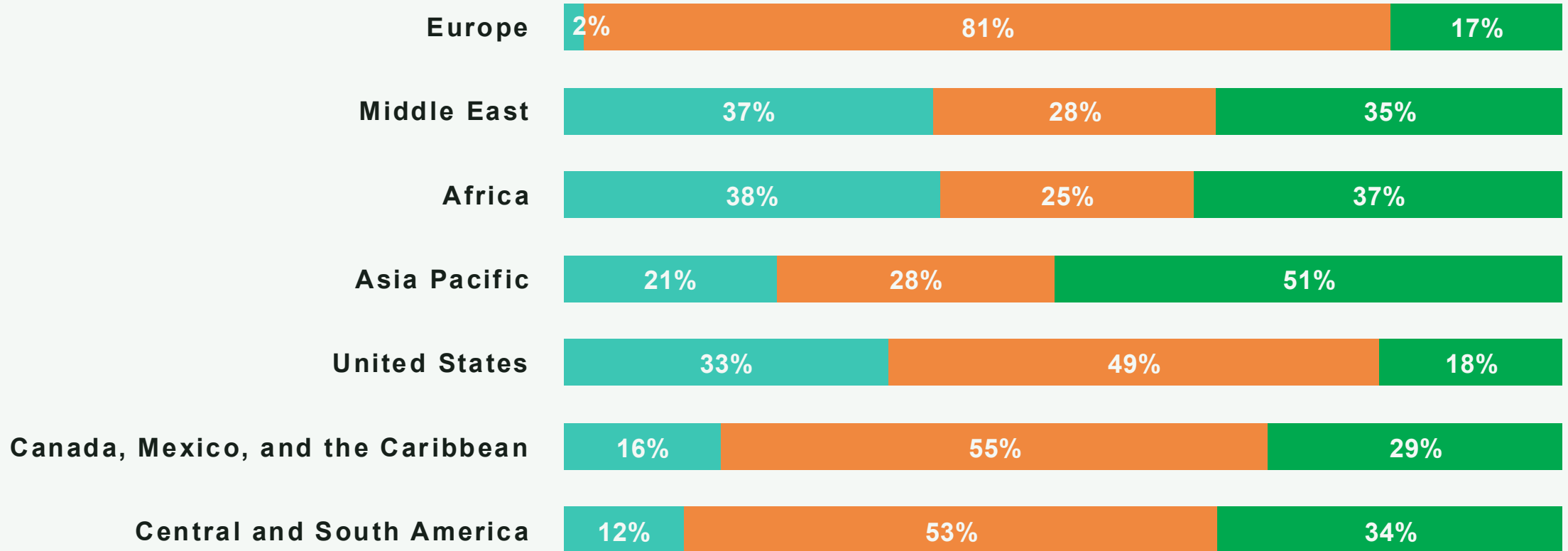


APAC is more appealing to planners, US less so

THREE OUT OF 10 PLANNERS FIND AFRICA, MIDDLE EAST, AND THE US LESS APPEALING

Compared to six months ago, how does each of the following regions appeal as a potential destination for your meetings and events?

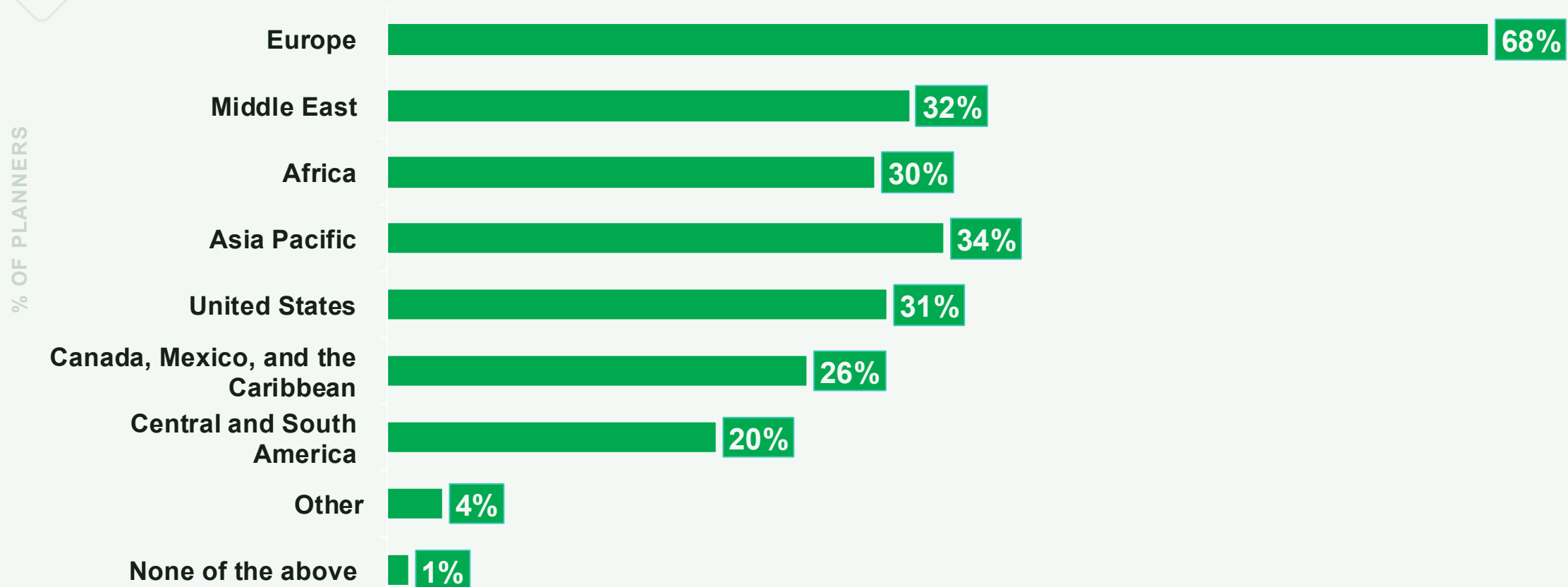
% OF PLANNERS



Europe is where most planners expect to see growth

PLANNERS HAVE MORE FAITH IN MIDDLE EAST AND ASIA PACIFIC THAN THE US RIGHT NOW

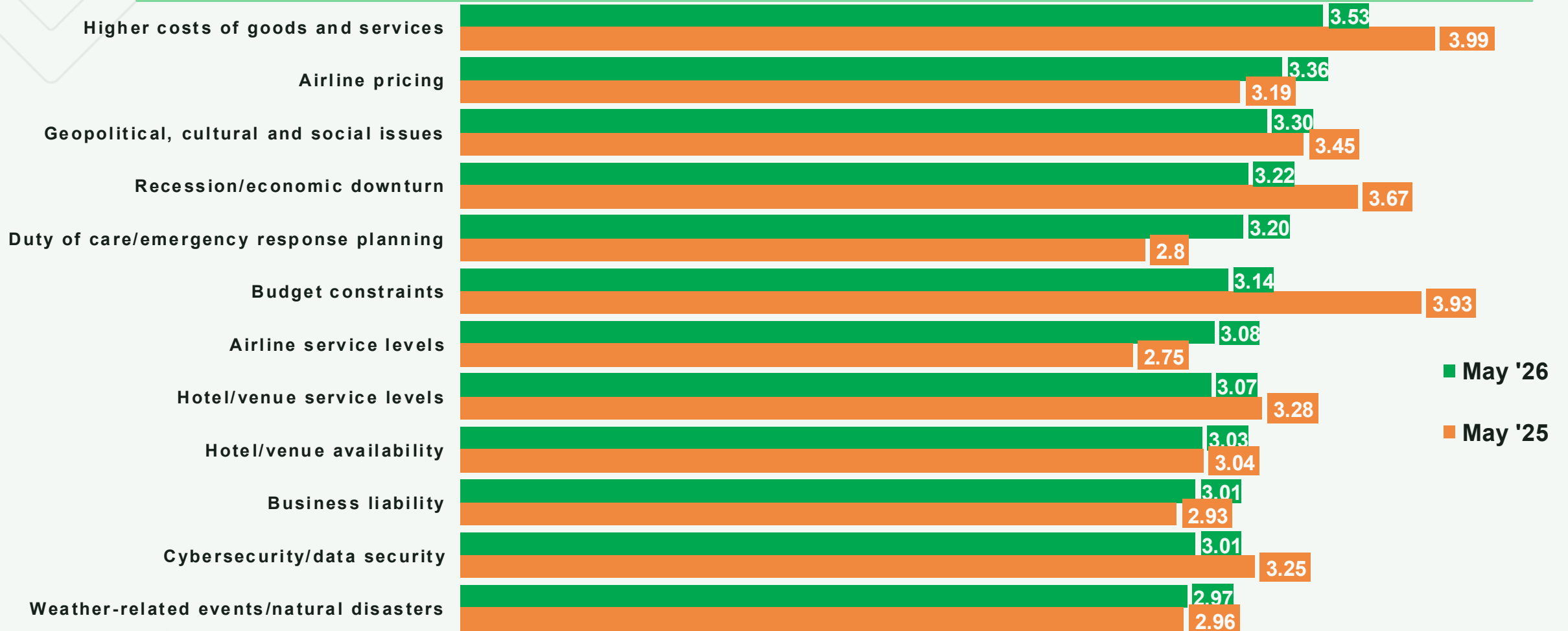
Looking ahead over the next five years, in which of the following regions do you currently expect opportunities for growth for your events? Select all that apply.



Airfares and service costs are keeping planners awake

BUT IN GENERAL MOST CONCERNS HAVE DECLINED SINCE LAST YEAR

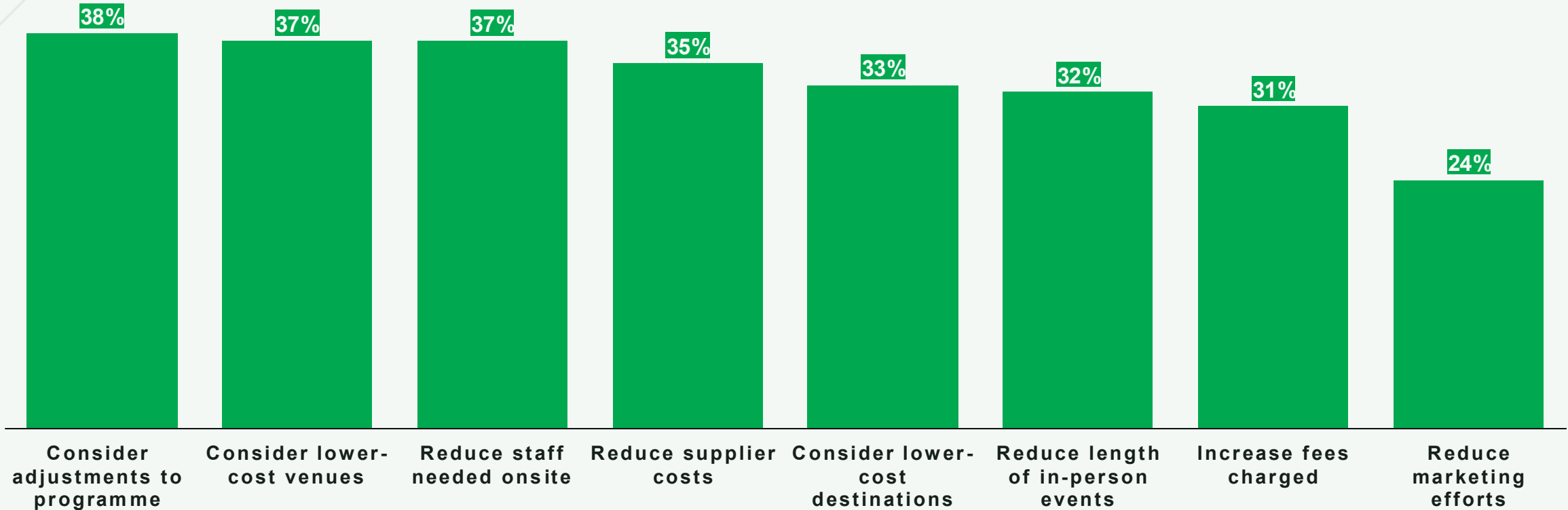
For your future in-person events, how concerned are you about the following?
Rate each on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being “not at all concerned” and 5 being “extremely concerned”).



Planners willing to pull several levers to adjust for costs

PROGRAMME ADJUSTMENTS, LOWER COST VENUES, AND REDUCED STAFF AMONG TOP OPTIONS

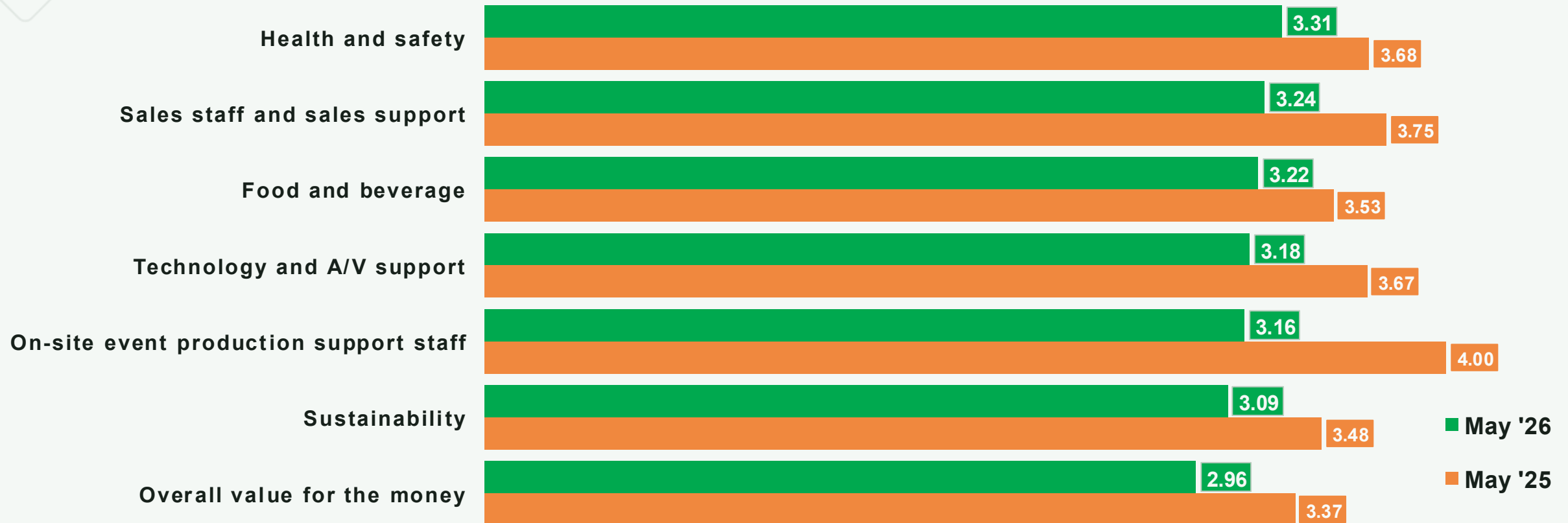
When you face higher than expected costs, what adjustments are you most likely to make? Select up to three.



Overall satisfaction with services has declined

HEALTH AND SAFETY IS RATED THE HIGHEST, VALUE FOR MONEY THE LOWEST

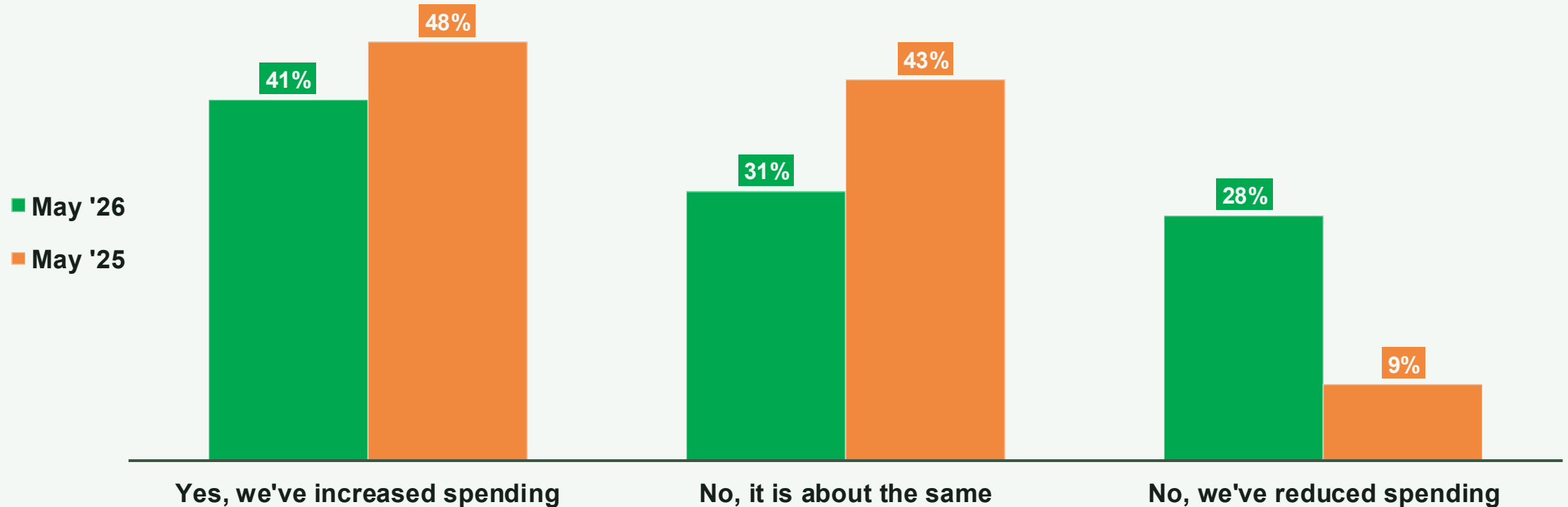
How satisfied are you with the service you are receiving from the hotels and venues you are now working with for your meetings and events (on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "not at all satisfied," and 5 being "extremely satisfied")?



More than a quarter of planners spending less on tech

FEWER PLANNERS HAVE INCREASED SPENDING COMPARED TO LAST YEAR

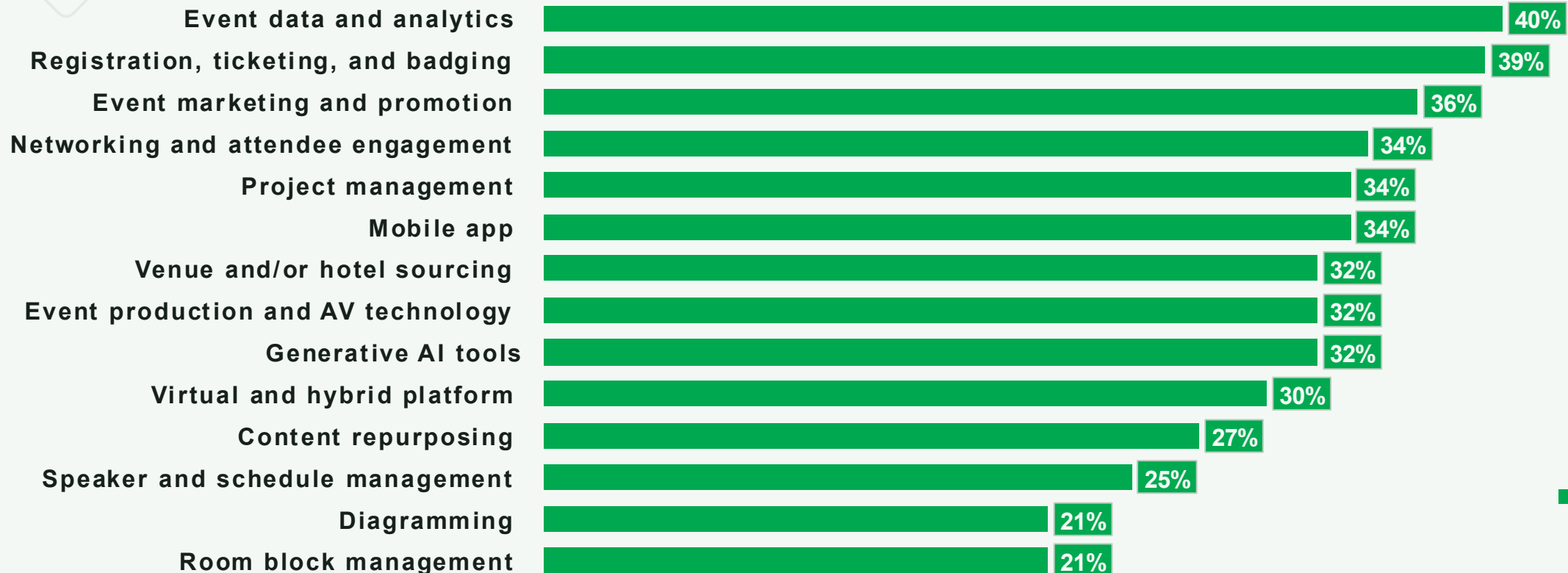
Have you increased your organisation's spending on meetings/event tech and meetings/event tech support (including registration, but not including A/V or A/V support) this year compared to last year?



Planners lean on tech for a wide range of functions

NOTABLY, TECH IS BEING USED TO TAKE THE GRUNT WORK OUT OF DATA ANALYSIS

Are you currently using the following event technology applications in support of your current meetings and events? Select all the apply.



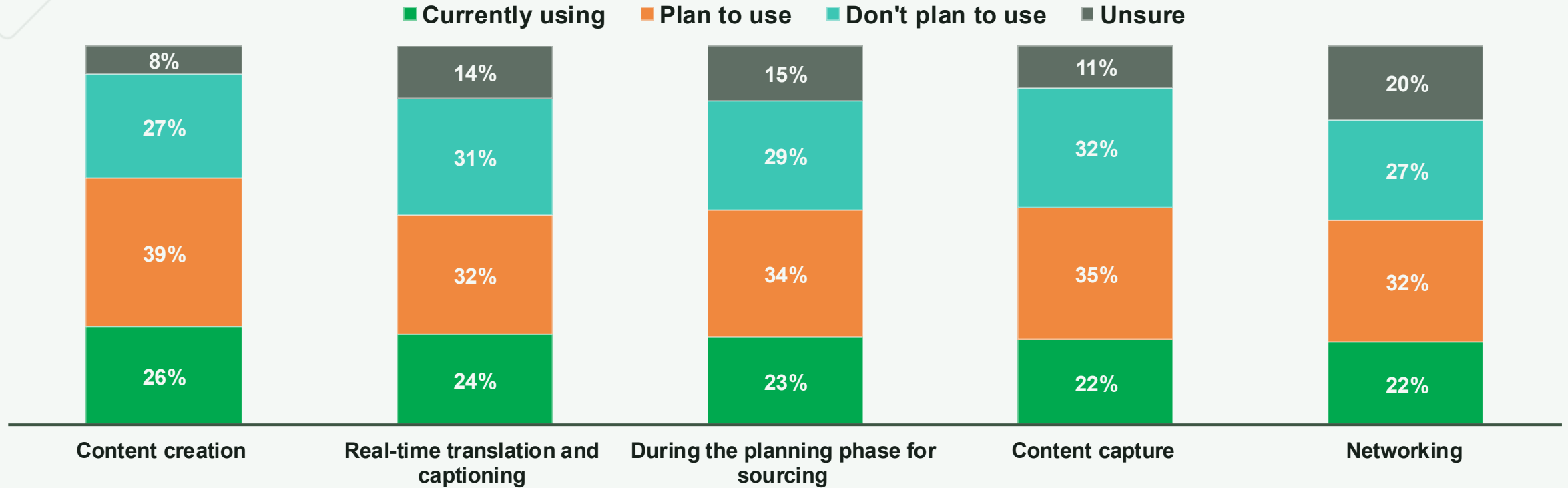
■ May '26

% OF PLANNERS

Around a third of planners holding out on AI

CONTENT CREATION IS THE BIGGEST USE CASE (CURRENT AND PLANNED) FOR AI

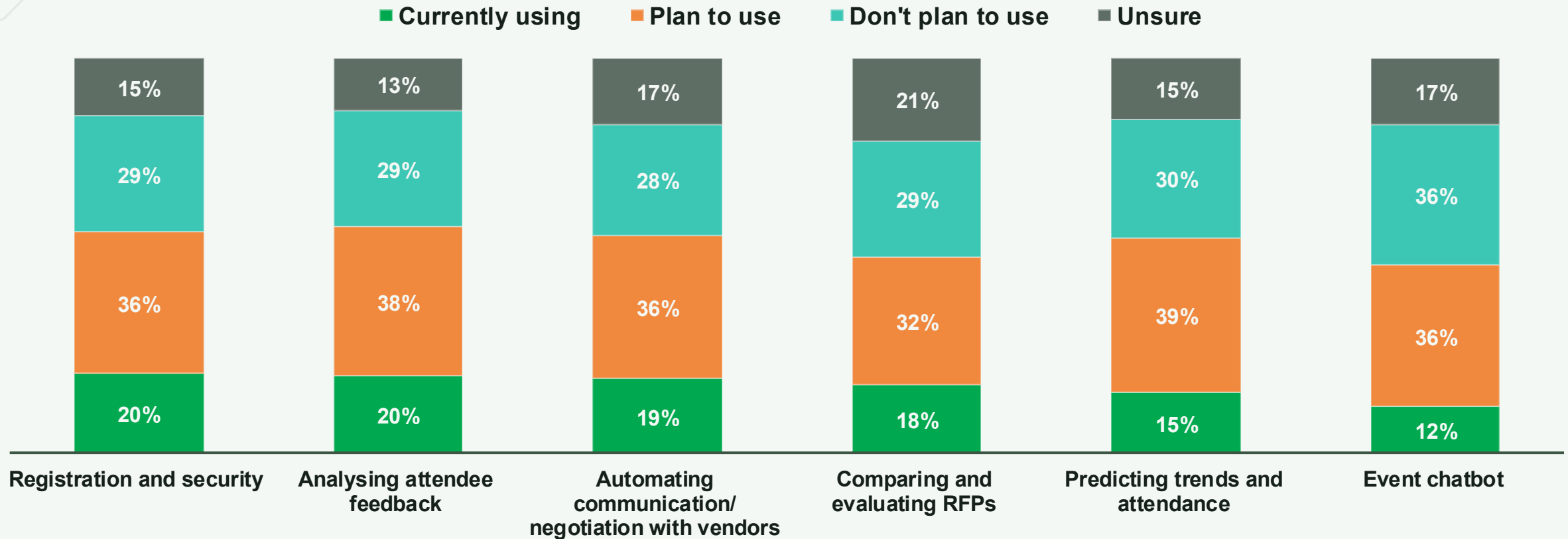
In what ways are you currently using, or plan to use AI tools to support your meetings and events? (1 of 2)



Few planners are using chatbots.

TAKE-UP OF AI IS MARGINAL ACROSS A WIDE RANGE OF EVENT PLANNER FUNCTIONS

In what ways are you currently using, or plan to use AI tools to support your meetings and events? (2 of 2)



AI has the biggest impact on time savings

FEW INDICATE THEY HAVEN'T SEEN ANY MEASURABLE IMPACT FROM AI.

In which areas, if any, has AI already driven measurable impact for your meetings and events programme? Please select up to three.

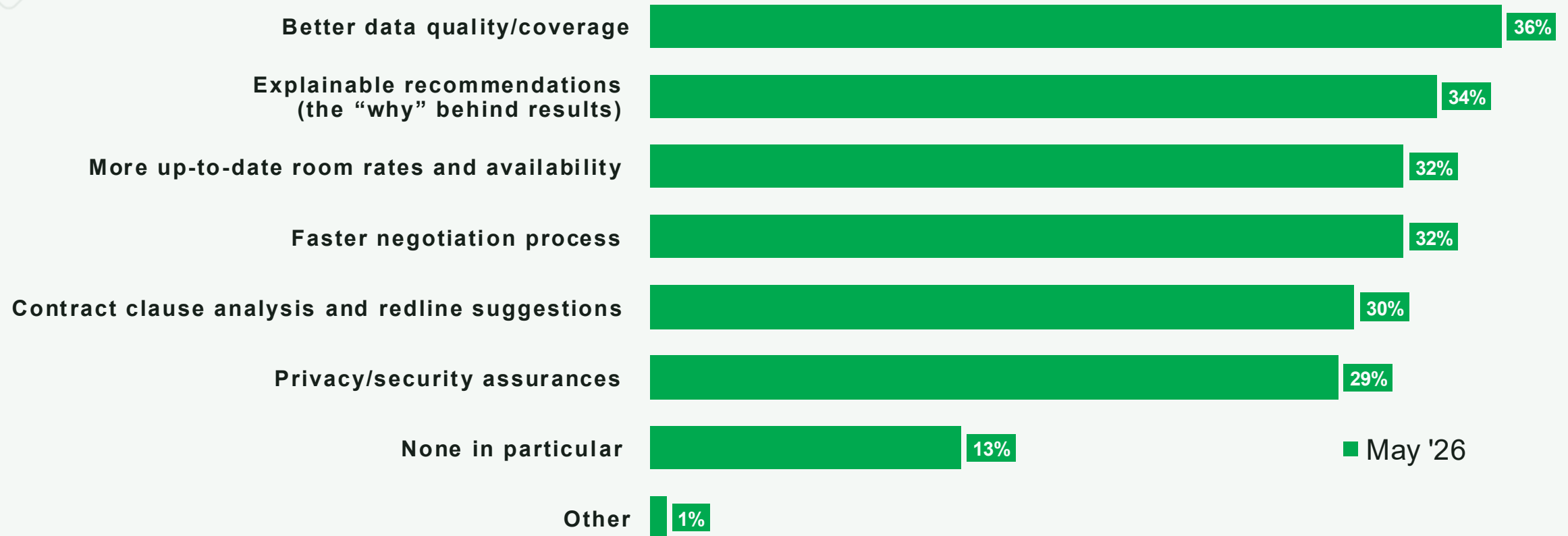


% OF PLANNERS

Planners see potential for AI when it comes to events

BOOKING AND NEGOTIATING WITH VENDORS ARE AREAS WHERE AI COULD HELP

In which areas could AI better assist your event management process?



Planner verbatim comments

- *“We have found that accuracy is an issue with most AI chat bots on websites.”*
- *“The geo-political and economic issues do affect attendance.”*
- *“We are working with local suppliers, Most have not yet incorporated AI tools.”*
- *“As a luxury MICE agency currently expanding its international footprint (specifically across Africa and Asia-Pacific), I find that the smart integration of generative AI has become an essential performance driver. It allows us to combine unprecedented agility and speed with the high standards of bespoke prestige events. Over the coming months, the main challenge will be for hotels and venues to stabilize their costs and service levels to effectively support this strong market recovery.”*